

## ARRIVAL STATEMENT

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER DELEGATION  
TO PAKISTAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS

October 23, 1990

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Vahit Halefoglu from Turkey, and I am pleased to introduce the international delegation that is in Pakistan to observe the October 24 and 27 National and Provincial elections. This delegation is being organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), which has gained an international reputation for professionalism in organizing such efforts.

Before we explain the nature of our visit, allow me to introduce the co-leader of this delegation Senator Stanislaw Dembinski of Poland, to my left. Senator Dembinski is a prominent figure in the Solidarity movement, which courageously and successfully spearheaded the democratic revolution in Eastern Europe. To my right is Ken Wollack, Executive Vice President of the National Democratic Institute.

I would also like to note that this 40-member delegation includes prominent parliamentarians, political party leaders, regional specialists and election experts from 17 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Western Hemisphere. Many of the delegation members have participated in the previous observer missions, including the mission that observed the 1988 National and Provincial Assembly elections.

Given the significance of these elections for the democratic future of Pakistan, it is not surprising that the elections have attracted international attention. This delegation has been welcomed by leaders of the caretaker government as well as leaders of major political parties. Many other Pakistanis also have expressed appreciation that this and other groups are present for the elections.

I wish to emphasize that this delegation is here as observers. We do not come as supervisors or arbiters. We have taken no

position on the outcome of these elections. Ultimately, it will be the Pakistani people who will judge the fairness of the electoral process.

The purposes of the delegation are to demonstrate the international community's continued support for free and fair elections, and for the democratization process in Pakistan. We also are here to learn from the people of Pakistan about the nature of the electoral process and its implications for Pakistan's political future. Let me emphasize though that the members of the delegation are not serving as representatives of governments, and therefore, we will not make policy recommendations as to bilateral issues among our respective countries. Our role is strictly limited to providing the international community with an assessment of Pakistan's electoral process.

This role is consistent with the practice of international election observer missions, a practice that is now widely accepted in the international community. The attitude of political party representatives and members of the caretaker government toward this delegation reflects this trend.

Two years ago, our predecessor delegation, also organized by NDI reported that the elections were conducted in a generally fair manner. It concluded that the laws and procedures compared favorably with those used in other peaceful democratic countries and that the pre-election campaign was, by and large, peaceful and fair.

While there has been serious debate in Pakistan about several aspects of these elections, all sectors of the population appear to be participating actively in the process. We have already met with a wide spectrum of Pakistanis to obtain their views on the electoral process and the delegation has already divided into teams, most of which have departed Islamabad to visit all four provinces of the country. Delegation members will meet with Pakistanis involved in the electoral process in each of the provinces and, on Wednesday, will observe the balloting and counting processes at hundreds of polling sites around the country.

The delegation has reviewed carefully the report of a pre-election international team that visited Pakistan several weeks ago to

assess the pre-election environment and preparations for the elections. Throughout our stay, members of the delegation will be obtaining assessments of Pakistanis regarding three distinct elements of the electoral process – the campaign period, election day procedures, and the tabulation of results.

The delegation reassembles in Karachi on Thursday to share our experiences and plans to issue a preliminary statement on Friday. Our observations of this process will, we expect, reflect those of the Pakistani people.

In addition to the delegation's observations of the National elections, a smaller group will remain in Pakistan to report on the Provincial elections. NDI representatives will also stay in Pakistan in order to gather post-election data. The delegation will then prepare a comprehensive report that will be published next month.

We wish to reiterate our support for the people of Pakistan in their efforts to consolidate democratic government in which political pluralism flourishes, individual rights are protected and the rule of law is institutionalized.

Thank you. We will be pleased to answer any questions.